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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 1322
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1158
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RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1064

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 002371

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (Classified By line)

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR
S/CRS
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/12/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [HA](#)
SUBJECT: STUDENTS ARE REVOLTING

REF: A. PORT AU PRINCE 2065

[1](#)B. PORT AU PRINCE 1792

PORT AU PR 00002371 001.4 OF 002

CLASSIFIED BY: Deputy Chief of Mission Thomas C. Tighe
for reasons 1.4(B) and (D).

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: Recent student protests culminated on December 5 with a demonstration in front of the Prime Minister's office that devolved into confrontations between MINUSTAH personnel and students who threw rocks and vandalized MINUSTAH vehicles. Three groupings appear to have generated the various protests over the past several weeks, though their aims are not always clearly distinguishable. The students have primarily espoused anti-globalization, anti-MINUSTAH themes, though protesters on December 5 directed their anger at the Prime Minister and the government's security policy. MINUSTAH believes that anti-government militants from outside the student movement are behind the more disorderly demonstrations. As reported earlier, we believe that the student-led demonstrations are neither sufficiently large or cohesive enough to pose a serious problem for the government or MINUSTAH, though they do pose a concern as both the government and MINUSTAH continue to come under criticism for failing to deal with security. End Summary.

Protest on December 5

[1](#)2. (U) Diverse student groups gathered in the streets of Port-au-Prince on December 5 in protests timed to coincide with the third anniversary of the attack on the State University of Haiti's School of Human Sciences in 2003. (Comment: The mobilization of students against the Aristide government following the attack on the state university was one of the crucial factors leading to Aristide's resignation. Aristide dispatched armed thugs to the university after students and faculty resisted the replacement of the dean with an Aristide crony. End Comment.) The protesters also made demands for the departure of MINUSTAH from Haiti. A group of approximately 100 gathered in front of the Prime

Minister's office, blocking one of the main traffic arteries.

When the crowd refused to disperse, MINUSTAH forces dispatched to the scene fired warning shots into the air, provoking the protesters to throw rocks and vandalize other MINUSTAH vehicles in the area. Student groups are speaking with increased confidence that they are successfully mobilizing students and other civil society organizations, especially in urban slums and rural areas. The widening group of student protesters in Port-au-Prince, fueled by recent incidents such as the kidnapping and murder of a teenage girl and a five-year-old boy, still needs a critical mass before being able to force the government into action.

Demands

13. (SBU) MINUSTAH's deputy political affairs section chief Lizbeth Cullity judges that the student groups who have protested in the past month fall into three different categories. The first takes a moderate stance - at least in public declarations - regarding the departure of MINUSTAH from Haiti. Major organizations that fall into this category include GRAFNEH (Grand Front National des Etudiants Haitiens), CONUH (Conference Nationale des Universitaires Haitiens) and REC (Rassemblement des Etudiants Capois). Their common complaint is that MINUSTAH has contributed to the deterioration of the security situation because they are unwilling to forcibly respond to the gangs. However, this moderate platform acknowledges that an immediate withdrawal of the UN troops would lead to chaos, and instead supports a withdrawal after the HNP is able to control security on its own. GRAFNEH also cites the reinstitution of a national army or a similar force as a precondition to MINUSTAH's departure.

14. (SBU) The second category of student groups are part of the larger Haitian Platform to Advocate for an Alternative Development (PAPDA). This is a leftist student movement with anti-globalization, pro-Chavez leanings that started the violent student protest against MINUSTAH on October 24 (ref A). Their call for MINUSTAH's departure is part of their overall agenda, but not their primary goal. The best-known name behind this group is Camille Chalmers, an

PORT AU PR 00002371 002.4 OF 002

anti-globalization academic attached to the human sciences faculty. Chalmers is a regular participant in political and academic forums in Port-au-Prince, usually advocating for Haitian debt relief, but generally presenting a non-confrontational stance.

15. (SBU) The third and most radical group of students is the Federation of Haitian University Students (FEUH), which is demanding immediate withdrawal of the MINUSTAH forces. FEUH has been operating in Haiti for years, but has evolved since post last reported on its activities, at which time FEUH could be characterized as an organization dedicated to educational reform, youth employment and pressuring the IGoH for action in a "non-destabilizing manner" (ref B). The group's recent more radical stance led MINUSTAH to believe that outside forces were behind their more disorderly protests of late.

Outside Agitators?

16. (C) Cullity expressed concern that anti-government militants, potentially from among both Aristide supporters or those advocating the re-establishment of the armed forces, might be driving FEUH. MINUSTAH had focused over the past several weeks on attempting to identify elements among this group that posed a threat to its mandate. In the past GRAFNEH received support from former presidential candidate Charles Henri Baker as well as the Group of 184, the coalition of political parties, businesses and civil society organizations that played the leading role in ousting

President Aristide. Jean-Robert Lalane, a businessman with ties to the FUSION party and the owner of Radio Maxima supports the REC, and recently told MINUSTAH's political chief, Gerardo Le Chevallier, that he would work with MINUSTAH to moderate this student group's posture against MINUSTAH. Le Chevallier believes that Lalane's principal interest is developing a loyal base among students for his own political/business ends rather than opposing MINUSTAH. (Note: Post revoked Lalane's B-1/B-2 visa in July of 2003 due to his interference in a DEA operation in Haiti. End note.)

17. (SBU) Comment: Recent developments have made conditions ripe for the reemergence of student protests. There is widespread discontent with continued insecurity in Port-au-Prince and a resurfacing of the nationalist and anti-globalization sentiment always present in Haitian politics. MINUSTAH is a convenient scapegoat for insecurity and the most obvious lightening rod for nationalists. Additionally, as Preval's term progresses, those impatient with the government are showing more willingness to air their grievances in the street. The overall number of demonstrators, however, remains small and confined to Port-au-Prince, and, as previously reported, we believe the majority of the populace continues to support MINUSTAH's presence. Nevertheless, any protests that generate disorder and divert MINUSTAH and HNP attention from the broader task of maintaining security are cause for concern.
SANDERSON